

BLACK JAVA NEWS

Quarterly Newsletter On Activism, Issues, Networking and Just Plain Fun Published By

Chicago Black Lesbians and Gays

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Go "Home For The Holidays" with A Real Read at celebration!

Members and friends of *Chicago Black Lesbians and Gays* will celebrate the end of a successful and productive year with a special holiday event. "Home For The Holidays" is the theme of a festive evening of toasts and performance beginning at 5pm on Sunday, December 14, 1997.

The event features *A Real Read*, Chicago's premier African American Lesbigantrans performance ensemble, which will present a collection of new works entitled "Love (can sometimes be) *A Real Read*." Produced in association with Randolph Street Gallery, this holiday benefit will underwrite the costs of *CBLG's* 1998 Chicago Unity Conference IV.

A cocktail reception kicks off at 5pm and the performance is set for 6pm at Randolph Street Gallery, 756 N. Milwaukee Ave.

Tickets are \$25 for the cash bar reception and performance and are available from *CBLG* steering committee members or by calling our hotline at 312-409-4917 to reserve tickets. ■



Chicago's Real Read presents "Home For The Holidays" at Randolph Street Gallery, 756 N. Milwaukee Ave...

Dr. Marjorie Hill Keynotes Chicago Unity Conference IV

Dr. Marjorie Hill, a nationally recognized activist and former New York City mayoral gay liaison, is now confirmed as a keynote speaker for *Unity IV*, the annual Chicago conference on Black lesbigantrans issues.

The conference theme, *Renaissance and Renewal*,

Celebrating Ourselves, acknowledges the reenergizing of community building in the Black lesbigantrans community. The event is set for Fri., April 3 and Sat., April 4, 1998 at the Holiday Inn Chicago City Centre. **call 312.409.4917**
"We will honor the enor-

mous work that has taken place in a short period of time and the contributions we are all making," said Israel Wright, who cochairs the conference with Chicago Mayoral Gay Liaison **Mary Morten**.

The growth of the conference, which attracts participants from many

Midwestern states prompted *CBLG* to expand and convene it for two days at a Chicago Loop hotel.

CBLG will also celebrate its 5th anniversary year and top off the conference with a Saturday night black tie gala dinner dance at the hotel.

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BLACK IDEAZ

Thanks, again and again!

Did you reflect this holiday season on how much you and we have to be thankful for?

Just take volunteerism. How many personal sacrifices are involved when you make the decision to reach into your wallet, or to set aside some time for hours of meetings, or to fetch, carry, lift, haul, lick (stamps) and engage in the myriad of activities that lead to successful community work? And, on the flip side, are there enough rulers and scales available to measure the long-term individual and community-wide benefits of that work? Who can place a monetary value on the many strong friendships and important relationships that are the fruit of such labor? If you can, let us know!

The 30 volunteers planning the **1998 Chicago Unity Conference IV** and **CBLG 5th Anniversary Celebration** are all doing just that: volunteering. As the conference's Renaissance and Renewal theme says, they are demonstrating how we, and our many organizations, are giving to our community. We do it in advocacy initiatives, in coalition-building with other groups, by making youth development happen, through the arts, and in increasing our visibility and participation in all facets of both the larger lesbigay/transgender community and the African-American communities of Chicago and the nation.

What? Organize a co-gender, gay, straight, and rainbow-flavored Chicago People of Color Coalition? What were they thinking? All the right stuff, apparently! We thank the creative Asian, Black, and Latino activists and organizations that are giving time, great skills, and energy to raise awareness about the issue of **AIDS Walk/Chicago's** "separate and unequal" treatment. Our annual report in this first edition of **BLACK JAVA** summarizes the results of an historic community organizing campaign led by dedicated **CBLG** members, including Renae Ogletree, Robert Schultz, Ben Williams.

Finally, a heartfelt "thank you" goes to Chicago's Blacklines magazine, the writers, photographers, artists, and editors responsible for its production. Get the scoop from a Black perspective - locally and from around the globe! Call them at 773-871-7610 to subscribe or give it as a gift.

Rainbow Jam Fund gives \$upport to Chicago's Queer Youth

Over \$6,000 in grant funds are available for young people of color who are interested in activism and improving their skills.

Chicago Black Lesbians and Gays and 17 other Asian, Black, and Latino groups came together as the **Rainbow Jam** coalition at last year's Democratic National Convention in Chicago. The result was an all night dance and money to create the **Queer Youth Development Fund of Chicago: A Fund for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Youth of Color**.

Rainbow Jam hosted over 600 guests and dozens of convention delegates who celebrated our community's *real* diversity.

The coalition crafted a new scholarship program to nurture the growth of our next generation of leaders. Eligible applicants for the fund's \$500 grants are Chicago and suburban youth of color, up to age 25, who are interested in working or volunteering with les/bi/gay/trans community groups.

CBLG's Michaela Purdue led the fund's guidelines committee and said, "Our goal was simple: to help youth of color afford the cost of participating in seminars, national conferences and other community development learning experiences."

Other **Rainbow Jam** sponsors that deserve kudos for their work are **AFFINITY**, African American AIDS Network, Association of Latin Men for Action, Brothers United In Support, Chicago Black Lesbians and Gays, Gay Asians and Pacific Islanders of Chicago, Korean American Lesbi Advocate, National Association of Black and White Men Together, National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum, Phrasority, Sister2Sister, The Bayard Rustin/Audre Lorde Democratic Club of Chicago, The Greater Chicago Committee, The Literary Exchange, Women of All Colors/Cultures Together, and YAHIMBA.

To get a grant application write the **Crossroads Fund**, 3411 W. Diversey Ave., Chicago, IL 60647-1245 or call 312-227-7676. ■

Unity IV Conference in April '98

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Six committees of volunteers are planning the conference which will feature issue discussions, networking, workshops, and institutes for men and

women. More volunteers are still needed. Call the **CBLG** Hotline at 312-409-4917 to volunteer and for more info. ■

CHICAGO BLACK LESBIANS AND GAYS 1997 ANNUAL REPORT

Chicago Black Lesbians and Gays experienced one of the busiest and most productive years in our history.

The year began with a celebration of **Black History Month** with more than 75 African-American lesbigaytrans participants.

UNITY III Conference

The April 1997 **Third Annual Unity** conference welcomed more than 200 conference attendees. Participants came not only from Chicago but also from cities throughout the Midwest, and from as far away as California and Colorado. The conference featured institutes for lesbians, gays, transgendered, and youth. A variety of workshops and artistic performances were scheduled throughout the day at the University of Illinois conference center.

The conference was highlighted by keynote speakers, the Honorable Ken Reeves, former Mayor

of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Keith Boykin Executive Director of the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum.

This year's conference was our most successful so far. The level of participation and representation of participants and facilitators from the local and national African-American lesbigaytrans community exceeded our expectations. The most frequently noted complaint was that there was not enough time, and people wanted the conference expanded to two days.

CBLG-Black Churches Co-Sponsor Event

Another important success during the year was the opportunity in early March for dialogue with members of eight Black churches about HIV/AIDS and homophobia in the African American community. CBLG organized **The Black Church Responds**, an event that attracted more than 100 individuals for a screening of the *All God's*

Children video, a panel discussion, and "speak out" on critical issues in the African American community.

An important foundation was laid for future dialogue with the heterosexual African-American community about issues important to the lesbigaytrans communities.

based organizations. Their hard work, vocal demonstrations, and public pressure led AIDS Walk to initiate a strategic planning process to make the institution more inclusive.

AIDS Walk proposes to develop strategies to include people of color in the governing structure of the board. CBLG believes,

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inside:



Breaking Barriers

Keynote Speaker Sets Tone for Spirited Black Unity C

By Stella Lohrsky

Chicago's Black Lesbians and Gays (CBLG) welcomed more than 200 participants to the 1997 Unity Conference III, held at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) on April 17-19. The conference, which was co-sponsored by CBLG, Black Churches, and the Chicago Black Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community Center, was a landmark event in the history of the Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community in Chicago. The conference was held at the UIC campus, which is a historic site for the Black community in Chicago. The conference was a success, with many participants reporting that it was a valuable experience. The conference was a landmark event in the history of the Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community in Chicago.

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Chicago's newsmedia, including the *Chicago Tribune*, *Blacklines*, *Outlines*, and *Windy City Times*, gave prominent coverage to CBLG's 1997 Unity Conference III.

CBLG & AIDS/Walk

CBLG's **Health Committee** initiated an inquiry into **AIDS Walk/Chicago** and the board's funding and governing policies related to people of color communities. Our work helped launch a new **Chicago People of Color Coalition**, comprised of Asian, Black, and Latino social service institutions and community

AIDS Walk must open its membership to the organization so that more people-of-color agencies **located** in communities of color will receive funding directly from Walk proceeds.

CBLG honored with Human Rights Award

A highlight of the summer
Continued on page 4

"We are proud of the many individuals and organizations working together to make change happen. Their efforts are producing results for Black lesbigaytrans people. That's how we help improve the community as a whole!"

- Renae Ogletree, CBLG Co-Chair

CBLG ANNUAL REPORT

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was a July community service Torch Award presented to CBLG by the *Human Rights Campaign*.

CBLG was also one of the groups that cosponsored September's *The Color Triangle*, a workshop on racism in the lesbianaytrans communities. More than 100 people participated, and several people were turned away because of a lack of space. This was the first time that such an open discussion of race was held. The next such discussions is planned for 10am on Dec. 13 at the Harold Washington Library.

New CBLG members get involved

New CBLG members continue to be one of the most valuable resources fueling CBLG's work. This year we welcomed more than 30 new active members. We also added more than 100 names to our mailing list because of our conference and other activities. Several of these new members have taken on significant responsibilities for the upcoming 1998 Unity Conference IV as committee chairs, as well as taking leadership on other CBLG committees.

Our new members are all African-Americans, and are evenly split between women and men. They live in Southside, Northside, Westside, and Loop areas

"Many new CBLG members are working on exciting plans for our annual citywide Unity Conference in April 1998"

- Mary Morten, Conference Co-Chair

of the city.

CBLG is 100% governed, directed, and focused on issues related to the lesbianaytrans communities.

We hold gender parity as a way of living and doing business. Gender parity is required for our steering committee and leadership of all activities and programs.

CBLG continues to provide a place for individuals to come together, learn from one another, network socialize and develop projects to work on that affect African American lesbianaytrans communities. Numerous groups in the community seek CBLG's counsel, particularly on issues related to diversity, but more importantly to ensure that there is representation from African American lesbianaytrans people.

As an example, CBLG continued its involvement in the *Annual Black Pride Celebration at the Belmont Rocks*. Our relationships with the 23rd Police District ensure equitable treatment of those attending.

CBLG's on-going *African-American LGBT Video Project* continues to record

the history of Chicago's black lesbianaytrans communities. It is important documentation and will serve as a learning tool for future activists.

CBLG Internal Planning

During the year, we also initiated a CBLG Strategic Planning process that has resulted in a new committee structure and bylaws in preparation for acquiring our 501(c)3 status.

Our new structure includes a committee membership and outreach committee that is looking for candidates for 1998 steering committee elections.

CBLG works in partnership with other lesbianaytrans groups. In 1997 we worked with the following: Affinity, Horizons Community Services, Yahimba, 23rd Police District, Mayor's Advisory Council on Lesbian and Gay issues, National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum, Lesbianay Radio Station, Literary Exchange, Lesbian Community Cancer Project, Adode, Ill. Federation for Human Rights, Brother-to-Brother, Queer Nation, Vision House, CALOR, Southside HIV/AIDS Providers, and Phrasority. ■

BLACK JAVA NEWS

A quarterly journal published as a service to our members by Chicago Black Lesbians and Gays

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Celebrating

Our 5th Anniversary Year.

Founded in 1993

to support Black LesBiGayTrans community development.

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